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VITAMINS IN THE DIET:

A radio talk prepared by Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter, and delivered by Miss Jean Stewart, Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, during the Western Farm and Home Hour, Friday March 25, 1932, through Stations KFI, KFSB, KTAR, KHQ, KOMO, KGW and KGHL, seven of the ten stations associated with the NBC-MGO network, Pacific Division, National Broadcasting Company.

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Are you interested in vitamins? Today we'll talk over the characteristics of Vitamin B and of Vitamin G. Since it is difficult to get these letters accurately by hearing them, let me explain that they are B as in Bobby and G as in George.

There was a time some years ago when these two vitamins seemed to be just one. But scientists discovered new characteristics of Vitamin B that did not fit in with its qualities as a whole. Then they found that what had seemed to be Vitamin B was at least two different ones. They finally identified Vitamin G as a separate factor in good nutrition. And now let me help you distinguish between these two vitamins.

The Vitamin B of today is essential in maintaining the tone of our muscles. Without it, the stomach loses its motility, and the appetite fails, with the final result of general listlessness. Everyone must have Vitamin B, but expectant and nursing mothers and young children have an especial need for it. We can definitely trace lack of or poor milk in the nursing woman and many of the appetite problems and sluggish digestive systems of early childhood to an insufficient amount of vitamin B. And there are even more serious effects. If any of us tried to do without Vitamin B for a long time, we would develop a very extreme condition of muscular paralysis known as polyncuritis or beriberi. Fortunately our diets are not likely to be as deficient as that, and fortunately, too, if they were, scientists could tell us what to do about it. Dr. Munsell in our nutrition laboratories in the Bureau of Home Economics has produced polyncuritis in experimental animals by depriving them of this vitamin. An animal completely paralyzed after 4 months without Vitamin B can be restored to his normal condition within 24 hours by adding foods rich in Vitamin B, a remarkable over-night recovery. Not many of the disorders caused by deficiencies or lacks in the diet can be overcome so quickly. In fact some can never be fully offset.

But you are anxious to know what foods supply vitamin B to us. The list is long because Vitamin B is widely distributed in nature, but we must always remember that this vitamin is very soluble in water and is partially destroyed by heat. For these reasons we must be sure to get some raw foods each day and not to overcook any of our fruits and vegetables. Perhaps you should remember the outstanding sources of Vitamin B as fruits and vegetables in general, and whole seeds such as nuts and whole grain cereals.

(over)

And now Vitamin G (G as in George). When this vitamin is lacking in the diet, the first result is disturbance of the digestive system. A young animal without Vitamin G stops growing, and an adult animal loses weight. A continued deficiency of foods rich in Vitamin G cause a sensitiveness of the skin, and finally skin lesions. These lesions produced experimentally in animals are similar to the human disease of the South known as pellagra. This disease, pellagra, develops in families who live during a large part of the year on corn meal, fat meat, rice or potatoes, and molasses or syrup. We used to think that pellagra was a skin infection, but we now know it is one of the dietary deficiency diseases. The same foods that are good sources of vitamin G help to prevent pellagra, and may be used in curing it.

Vitamin G is fairly widely distributed in a number of foods in small quantities. Green leaves, lean meats, and the embryo portion of cereals, -- for instance wheat germ -- are the best sources of Vitamin G.

There is one thing to remember especially about these two vitamins and that is that they are very soluble in water. They occur in the juices of the fruits and vegetables that contain them, and are therefore very easily dissolved in the water used in cooking. In order to get the benefit of these vitamins it is desirable to serve pot liquor whenever possible.

If you are interested in copies of this talk on Vitamins B and G or information on other vitamins, write to this station. If you wish more technical and detailed information, or if you need an answer to any special question about vitamins ask us for those things too, when you write.